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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this reading sampler is to familiarize Delaware teachers and students with the reading comprehension portion of the Delaware Student Testing Program. Included is information about the reading tests for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. This sampler contains the following examples for each grade level: a reading passage; a multiple choice item; a short answer item (with scoring rubric); an extended response item (with scoring rubric); and a text-based writing item (with scoring rubric). (RS)

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Spring 1999

ED 432 732

DELAWARE

STUDENT TESTING PROGRAM

ITEM SAMPLER

READING COMPREHENSION

Grades 3, 5, 8, and 10

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READING COMPREHENSION

The purpose of this sampler is to familiarize Delaware teachers and students with the reading comprehension portion of the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP). Included is information about the reading tests for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. This sampler contains the following examples for each grade level:

- A reading passage
- A multiple choice item
- A short answer item (with scoring rubric)
- An extended response item (with scoring rubric)
- A text-based writing item (with scoring rubric)

The sample passage and items in this sampler are taken from the item development bank. The reading section of the DSTP provides students with reading passages and asks them to respond to questions about those passages. The passages may be literary, informative, or technical in nature. The items are a combination of multiple choice, short answer, extended response, and text-based writing items.

- **Multiple choice items** require students to show what they know and are able to do by selecting the best response from the four answer choices provided. Multiple choice items are scored at one point each.

- **Short answer items** allow students to make decisions by constructing brief responses that demonstrate the students' understanding of the text. The short answer items are scored on a 0-1-2 scale, using item-specific rubrics.

- **Extended response items** allow students to make decisions by constructing more lengthy responses that demonstrate the students' understanding of the text and require students to provide justification for their responses. The extended response items are scored on a 0-1-2-3-4 scale, using item-specific rubrics.

- **Text-based writing items** are extended response items that are scored for both reading and writing.

Items in the reading section are aligned to English Language Arts Standards Two and Four.

> **English Language Arts Standard Two:** *Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing.*
>
> **English Language Arts Standard Four:** *Students will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.*

Each reading item is classified by the stance the reader takes when reading the text. These stances are based on the performance indicators for English Language Arts Standards Two and Four. The stances are:

- **Determining Meaning** items require the reader to demonstrate an overall understanding of the text by forming initial understandings and very basic connections within the text.

- **Interpreting Meaning** items require the reader to demonstrate a more complete understanding of the text by going beyond the initial understanding to develop an interpretation of the text.

- **Extending Meaning** items require the reader to demonstrate a critical analysis of the text by standing apart from the text and examining, evaluating, and analyzing the writer's craft.

Read the following passage about the pandas. Then answer the questions.

Protecting the Pandas

by Robin L. Santos

The wind whistles down the cold, snowy mountains in China. All is quiet in the bamboo forest below. Suddenly — CRUNCH, SNAP! A bearlike creature appears out of the bamboo. For hours, the animal munches on one bamboo shoot after another. Then slowly, it lumbers over to a hollow tree, squeezes itself in, and falls fast asleep.

Many people recognize this animal by its white and black markings. Do you? It's a giant panda! Giant pandas have lived in the mountains of China for thousands of years. But now these special creatures are in danger of dying out. Some scientists say there are fewer than 1,000 giant pandas left in the wild in China.

Pandas in Danger

Pandas need a lot of food to survive. They sometimes eat fish and small rodents. But their main food is bamboo. A panda can eat up to 85 pounds of bamboo in just one day!

Long ago, finding bamboo was easy for pandas. China had many bamboo forests. But people have cut down more and more of these forests to make room for villages and farms. So pandas are losing their homes and their food. Sometimes the pandas starve.

Another danger for pandas is poachers. *Poachers* are people who hunt and kill animals, even though it is against the law. Poachers hunt pandas. Then they sell their skins in foreign countries for lots of money.

People Helping Pandas

Many people from around the world are working to help save giant pandas. Some people in China have set up special areas, called *reserves*, where the pandas can be safe.

On the reserves, workers try to protect pandas from poachers. They also stop villagers from cutting down bamboo forests. Sometimes workers buy land from villagers who live on the reserves. Then they can plant more bamboo for the pandas.

More bamboo forests and fewer poachers should help more pandas survive in the future.

From *U*S* Kids*, a Weekly Reader *magazine*, copyright © 1991 by Children's Better Health Institute, Benjamin Franklin Literary & Medical Society, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana. Used by permission.

Extending Meaning Stance

Item:

The words "*poachers*" and "*reserves*" are in italics because the author —

a. tells the meaning of the word for the reader
b. shows the reader how to spell the words
c. wants the reader to learn to spell the words
d. helps the reader understand the picture

Answer: a

Determining Meaning Stance

Item:

According to the article, what are the reasons there are so few pandas left in the wild?

Scoring Rubric:

2	Response is a complete and accurate explanation of the reasons that the pandas in the wild are in danger.
1	Response is an incomplete or only partially accurate explanation of the reasons that the pandas in the wild are in danger.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 2 responses will reference the danger both from poachers and from the destruction of the pandas' home and food supply.

Determining Meaning Stance

Item:

What information from the article would best help someone learn what pandas are really like?

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response demonstrates a complete and thorough understanding of the text, citing sufficient relevant details from the article.
3	Response demonstrates an adequate understanding of the text, citing some relevant details from the article.
2	Response demonstrates a limited understanding of the text, citing few, if any, relevant details from the article.
1	Response attempts to demonstrate an understanding of the text but indicates serious misconceptions, citing few or no details from the article.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or incorrect.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses will reference the pandas' appearance, where the panda lives, and what the panda eats.

Interpreting Meaning Stance

Item:

Pretend you are a worker on a reserve. Write a letter to a friend and explain the kind of work you do every day. Use details from the article to support your answer.

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text and includes sufficient relevant details in the explanation.
3	Response demonstrates an adequate understanding of the text and includes some relevant details in the explanation.
2	Response demonstrates a limited or sketchy understanding of the text and includes few, if any, relevant details in the explanation.
1	Response attempts to give an explanation but indicates serious misconceptions in understanding the text and includes very few details from the passage.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses will reference the protection of pandas from poachers, stopping the cutting of bamboo forests, and buying land on which to plant bamboo to feed to the pandas.

This recipe comes from a cookbook written for kids. Read the recipe and then answer the questions.

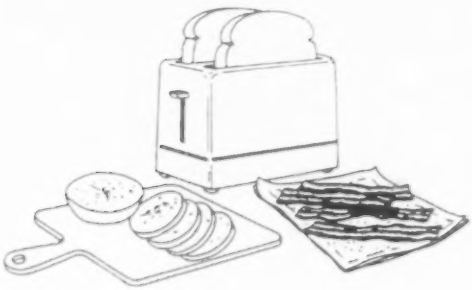
Bacon-Tomato Sandwiches

Ingredients

1 tomato
4 slices bacon
4 slices bread
Peanut butter, butter, *or* mayonnaise

Equipment

cutting board
serrated knife
10-inch skillet
tongs
paper towels
toaster
table knife



Slice the tomato with a serrated knife because it cuts through the skin easily. Cut it into 4 or 6 thin pieces.

1. Wash tomato. Put on a cutting board. With adult help, use a serrated knife to slice the tomato, as shown.
2. Put bacon slices side-by-side in skillet. Put skillet on burner. With adult help, turn burner to low heat. Cook bacon till crisp, turning often with tongs. This will take about 6 minutes. Turn off burner.
3. Remove bacon from pan with tongs and put on paper towels to drain.
4. With adult help, toast the bread. Use table knife to spread one side of each piece of toast with peanut butter, butter, or mayonnaise. Put 2 slices of bacon on one piece of toast. Put the other 2 slices of bacon on another piece of toast. Top bacon with tomato slices and rest of toast, plain side up. With adult help, use serrated knife to cut sandwiches in half.

Makes 2 sandwiches.

Something Different

Bacon-Cheese Sandwiches: Make the sandwiches, following instructions at left. Top the tomato slices with a slice of American cheese.

BLT (Bacon-Lettuce-Tomato) Sandwiches: Make the sandwiches, following instructions at left. Top tomato slices with a lettuce leaf.

Bacon and Egg Sandwiches: Make the sandwiches, following instructions at left. Top the tomato slices with a sliced hard-cooked egg.

California Sandwiches: Make the sandwiches, following instructions at left. Top the tomato slices with some avocado slices and bean sprouts.

This recipe is copyrighted material of Meredith Corporation, used with their permission. All rights reserved.

Determining Meaning Stance

Item:

Which step tells how to put the sandwich together?

a. Step 1
b. Step 2
c. Step 3
d. Step 4

Answer: d

Interpreting Meaning Stance

Item:

Why are two different kinds of knives used?

Scoring Rubric:

2	Response is a complete and accurate explanation of the uses of both types of knives.
1	Response is an incomplete or only partially accurate explanation of the uses of both types of knives. Response may explain the use of only one type of knife.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 2 responses will reference the use of both the serrated knife and the table knife.

Extending Meaning Stance

Item:

You've been asked to add a recipe to the "Something Different" section. Write your recipe as it would appear in the section and explain why it would be a good addition.

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response thoroughly describes an appropriate recipe and includes sufficient relevant details from the text in the explanation.
3	Response adequately describes an appropriate recipe and includes some relevant details from the text in the explanation.
2	Response marginally describes an appropriate recipe and includes few, if any, details from the text in the explanation.
1	Response attempts to describe a recipe and/or give an explanation but indicates serious misconceptions in understanding the text and includes very few details from the text.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses will describe a variation of the basic recipe and explain the benefits of the ingredients (uses mostly the same ingredients, is different in some way from the other recipes, etc.) in the variation.

Interpreting Meaning Stance

Item:

Your class has decided to ask the school cafeteria to add a "Make Your Own Sandwich" section to the school lunch line. Write a letter to the cafeteria manager explaining why the Bacon-Tomato Sandwiches recipe would be a good one to use in the new section.

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text and includes sufficient relevant details in the explanation.
3	Response demonstrates an adequate understanding of the text and includes some relevant details in the explanation.
2	Response demonstrates a limited or sketchy understanding of the text and includes few, if any, relevant details in the explanation.
1	Response attempts to give an explanation but indicates serious misconceptions in understanding the text and includes very few details from the passage.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses will reference the benefits (simple ingredients, many variations, liked by most students, easy to assemble, requires very little cooking, etc.) of the Bacon-Tomato Sandwiches recipe for a "Make Your Own Sandwich" section of the cafeteria line.

In Japan, many stories are told about Ooka, a judge who once lived in Tokyo. Read the story about one of Ooka's cases and answer the questions that follow.

Ooka and the Stolen Smell

Now it so happened in the days of old Yedo, as Tokyo was once called, that the storytellers told marvelous tales of the wit and wisdom of His Honorable Honor, Ooka Tadasuke, Echizen-no-Kami.

This famous judge never refused to hear a complaint, even if it seemed strange or unreasonable. People sometimes came to his court with the most unusual cases, but Ooka always agreed to listen. And the strangest case of all was the famous Case of the Stolen Smell.

It all began when a poor student rented a room over a *tempura* shop — a shop where fried food could be bought. The student was a most likable young man, but the shopkeeper was a miser who suspected everyone of trying to get the better of him. One day he heard the student talking with one of his friends.

"It is sad to be so poor that one can only afford to eat plain rice," the friend complained.

"Oh," said the student, "I have found a very satisfactory answer to the problem. I eat my rice each day while the shopkeeper downstairs fries his fish. The smell comes up, and my humble rice seems to have much more flavor. It is really the smell, you know, that makes things taste so good."

The shopkeeper was furious. To think that someone was enjoying the smell of his fish for nothing! "Thief!" he shouted. "I demand that you pay me for the smells you have stolen."

"A smell is a smell," the young man replied. "Anyone can smell what he wants to. I will pay you nothing!"

Scarlet with rage, the shopkeeper rushed to Ooka's court and charged the student with theft. Of course, everyone laughed at him, for how could anyone steal a smell? Ooka would surely send the man about his business. But to everyone's astonishment, the judge agreed to hear the case.

"Every man is entitled to his hour in court," he explained. "If this man feels strongly enough about his smells to make a complaint, it is only right that I, as city magistrate, should hear the case." He frowned at the amused spectators.

Gravely Ooka sat on the dais and heard the evidence. Then he delivered his verdict.

"The student is obviously guilty," he said severely. "Taking another person's property is theft, and I cannot see that a smell is different from any other property."

The shopkeeper was delighted, but the student was horrified. He was very poor, and he owed the shopkeeper for three months' smelling. He would surely be thrown into prison.

"How much money have you?" Ooka asked him.

"Only five *mon*, Honorable Honor," the boy replied. "I need that to pay my rent or I will be thrown out into the street."

"Let me see the money," said the judge.

The young man held out his hand. Ooka nodded and told him to drop the coins from one hand to the other.

The judge listened to the pleasant clink of the money and said to the shopkeeper, "You have now been paid. If you have any other complaints in the future, please bring them to the court. It is our wish that all injustices be punished and all virtue rewarded."

"But, most Honorable Honor," the shopkeeper protested, "I did not get the money! The thief dropped it from one hand to the other. See! I have nothing." He held up his empty hands to show the judge.

Ooka stared at him gravely. "It is the court's judgment that the punishment should fit the crime. I have decided that the price of the *smell* of food shall be the *sound* of money. Justice has prevailed as usual in my court."

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Interpreting Meaning Stance

Item:

The author's purpose in writing this story was probably to —

a. teach a lesson
b. persuade with facts
c. describe a system
d. explain a process

Answer: a

Interpreting Meaning Stance

Item:

What is the most likely reason that the author describes the shopkeeper as a miser?

Scoring Rubric:

2	Response is a complete and accurate explanation of the author's description.
1	Response is an incomplete or only partially accurate explanation of the author's description.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 2 responses reference text support (doesn't want to give anything away, suspicious of everyone) for the description.

Extending Meaning Stance

Item:

How is Ooka's behavior during the trial contradicted by the verdict he gives? Use details from the story to support your answer.

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response demonstrates a complete and thorough understanding of the irony of the situation, citing relevant and sufficient details from the selections as support.
3	Response demonstrates an adequate understanding of the irony of the situation, citing some relevant details from the selection as support.
2	Response demonstrates a limited understanding of the irony of the situation, citing very few relevant details from the selection as support.
1	Response attempts to explain the irony of the situation but demonstrates serious misconceptions, citing few or no details from the selection as support.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses reference the contrast between Ooka's serious demeanor during the trial (frowns at amused spectators, listens gravely, speaks severely, stares gravely, etc.) and the humor of Ooka's verdict (the *sound* of money is payment for the *smell* of food).

Extending Meaning Stance

Item:

At the end of the story, Ooka states, "It is the court's judgment that the punishment should fit the crime." Write an essay explaining whether or not you feel that the punishment in the case does fit the crime. Use details from the story to support your opinion.

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response takes a clear stance and demonstrates a complete and thorough understanding of the text, citing relevant and sufficient details from the selections as support.
3	Response takes a stance and demonstrates an adequate understanding of the text, citing some relevant details from the selection as support.
2	Response suggests a stance and demonstrates a limited understanding of the text, citing very few relevant details from the selection as support.
1	Response attempts to take a stance but demonstrates serious misconceptions about the text, citing few or no details from the selection as support.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses take a clear stance and support the stance with details from the text (it fits – the shopkeeper is really losing nothing so the student is really paying nothing, OR it doesn't fit – there shouldn't have been a trial since there really was no real wrong done and it was unfair to make the student go through a trial).

Read the following poem and excerpt from a speech by two well-known African-Americans. Then answer the questions.

Daybreak in Alabama

by Langston Hughes

When I get to be a composer
I'm gonna write me some music about
Daybreak in Alabama
And I'm gonna put the purtiest songs in it
Rising out of the ground like a swamp mist
And falling out of heaven like soft dew.
I'm gonna put some tall trees in it
And the scent of pine needles
And the smell of red clay after rain
And long red necks
And poppy colored faces
And big brown arms
And the field daisy eyes
Of black and white black white black people
And I'm gonna put white hands
And black hands and brown and yellow hands
And red clay earth hands in it
Touching everybody with kind fingers
And touching each other natural as dew
In that dawn of music when I
Get to be a composer
And write about daybreak
In Alabama.

From *Collected Poems* by Langston Hughes. Copyright © 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Excerpt from "I Have a Dream"

by Martin Luther King, Jr.

. . . I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. . . .

From Dr. King's address at the "Jobs and Freedom" march in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963.

Extending Meaning Stance

Item:

The speaker's desire to compose music about daybreak in Alabama is most likely influenced by which of the following ideas about music?

a. Music is a popular art form.
b. Music is the key to the female heart.
c. Music is a universal language.
d. Music is but a temporary distraction.

Answer: c

Extending Meaning Stance

Item:

Explain the metaphor King uses in the following paragraph from his speech:

> I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

Scoring Rubric:

2 Response is a complete and accurate explanation of the meaning of the metaphor.

1 Response is an incomplete, partially accurate, or literal meaning of the metaphor.

0 Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 2 responses explain the parallel between a desert being transformed into an oasis and the injustice and oppression in Mississippi being turned into freedom and justice.

Interpreting Meaning Stance

Item:

Compare and contrast Hughes' use of color in his poem with King's use of color in his speech. Use details from the selections in your answer.

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response demonstrates a complete and thorough understanding of how the authors' uses of color in the selections compare and contrast with one another, citing relevant and sufficient details from the selections as support.
3	Response demonstrates an adequate understanding of how the authors' uses of color compare and contrast with one another, citing some relevant details from the selection as support.
2	Response demonstrates a limited understanding of how the authors' uses of color compare and contrast with one another, citing very few relevant details from the selection as support.
1	Response attempts to compare and contrast the authors' uses of color but indicates serious misconceptions and cites few, if any, relevant details from the selection as support.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses compare (black and white joining together) and contrast (Hughes includes red, brown, and yellow to signify the joining together of all races whereas King concentrates on the joining of the black and white races) the use of color.

Extending Meaning Stance

Choose a line from Martin Luther King's speech that reflects the sentiments of the speaker in the poem by Langston Hughes. Write an essay explaining why the line you chose best reflects the speaker's sentiments.

Scoring Rubric:

4	Response identifies an appropriate line and demonstrates a complete and thorough understanding of how the selected line reflects the speaker's sentiment.
3	Response identifies an appropriate line and demonstrates an adequate understanding of how the selected line reflects the speaker's sentiment.
2	Response identifies an appropriate line and demonstrates a limited understanding of how the selected line reflects the speaker's sentiment.
1	Response identifies a line from the speech and attempts to explain how the selected line reflects the speaker's sentiment, but the response indicates serious misconceptions.
0	Response is totally inappropriate or inaccurate.

NOTE: Score point 4 responses choose an appropriate line (almost any line would be acceptable) and explain how it reflects the speaker's sentiments (for example, the line "With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood" reflects the speaker's feeling that people, like music, can be harmonious when they are properly brought together).